



---

# **CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

---

**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 11, 2011 – 7:30pm**

### **Attendance**

*Commission Members:* Daphne Collins (Chair), Philip Plottel (Vice Chair), Jack Leader (Secretary), Matthew Cuddy, Charles Eisenberg, Jane Ives, Peter Kai Jung Lew, John Pears, Christopher Steele

*Staff:* Candace Havens (Director, Planning and Development), Jennifer Molinsky (Chief Planner for Long-Range Planning), Amanda Stout (Sr. Economic Development Planner)

*Guests:* Mayor Setti Warren, Ald. Victoria Danberg, Ald. Stephen Linsky, Eunice Kim, Erik Larson, Ron Lipof, Joyce Moss, Bill Renke, Anatol Zukerman

*Absent:* Jerry Adams, Robert Gifford

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1. EDC Business**

- Vote on December 14, 2010 Minutes. Motion to approve (9-0) (Eisenberg, seconded by Lew).
- Mayor Warren has appointed three new members to the EDC (Ron Lipof, Joyce Moss, and Darryl Settles), pending approval of the Zoning and Planning Committee (January 24) and the full Board of Aldermen (February 7). Additional members may be appointed in the weeks ahead.
- EDC Annual Report to be completed in February 2011.

#### **2. Discussion with Mayor Setti Warren**

- Mayor Warren noted that he was impressed with the work of the EDC over the past year and offered his vision for economic development for the City. He noted four priority areas that offer opportunities for creative economic development: Austin Street, Needham Street, Newton Centre, and Chestnut Hill Square. He stressed a focus on the villages, including partnering with property owners, business owners, and residents through an expanded Newton SERVES program and other initiatives. He explained that the five-year budget forecast that was presented in October was the City's first attempt at multi-year budgeting and it revealed an \$8 million budget gap. The City is currently developing its first Capital Plan and using a zero-based budgeting approach.
- The Mayor and EDC members discussed the current forward movement on implementing some aspects of the Newton Centre Task Force Report. In response to EDC member comments, the Mayor noted that the City needs to build relationships and provide a vision and planning principles for certain development sites, while allowing for flexibility in the development phase. There was discussion about flaws in the zoning ordinance and a new task force that would soon be formed around zoning reform. The Mayor noted that he wants the Planning Department to be more proactive, the 13 different villages are important, and that it is important to have resident participation. The Mayor agreed with EDC members that predictability is important to the business community and noted that the Board of Aldermen needs to be involved in that conversation, too.



---

## **CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

---

#### **3. Feasibility Analysis Working Group**

- Philip Plottel explained that the working group is continuing with their high level analysis of the valuable “Firefighter’s Triangle” site in Newton Centre and is considering what would be the best use of the property from the City’s perspective. They are examining the cost of reusing the existing fire station vs. rebuilding it. Candace Havens added that the Planning Department is writing a parallel report that examines the site from the perspective of the zoning ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan.
- Ald. Linsky noted that there is currently discussion as to whether the next fire station to be rehabilitated would be Station #3 (Newton Centre) or Station #10 (Dedham Street).

#### **4. Austin Street**

- Ald. Danberg and Ald. Linsky mentioned that the next phase in the Real Property Reuse process for the Austin Street site is the formation of a Joint Advisory Planning Group (JAPG). The JAPG is comprised of 7 Mayoral appointees and 7 Board appointees, and there will likely be EDC representation. Daphne Collins made a formal request to Ald. Danberg and Ald. Linsky that one EDC member be appointed to the JAPG. Candace Havens noted that, once the JAPG is formed, it has a 90-day time horizon.
- Chuck Eisenberg recused himself from further discussions of the Austin Street site.

#### **5. Business Improvement District (BID)**

- Daphne Collins said that, while there has been a lot of general support for BIDs expressed by the EDC and by various people in Newton, the next step is to reach out to property owners in Newton Centre. She said that the EDC might create an environment for this to happen and organize a meeting with property owners in April. The topic is scheduled for a Long-Range Planning Committee of the Board of Aldermen in late January.

#### **6. Other Business**

- A proposed mixed-use development project at Elm and Border Streets in West Newton will be brought to the EDC for review at the appropriate time, in advance of a public hearing before the Land Use Committee, but this is premature at this time.
- In response to a question, Candace Havens confirmed that the Chestnut Hill Square project has stalled because the owners of the Atrium Mall and Chestnut Hill Mall have filed suit against New England Development and the City of Newton Board of Aldermen.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout, AICP

Sr. Economic Development Planner